DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 064 997 FL 003 378

AUTHOR Marckwardt, Albert H.
TITLE The Relationship between TESOL and the Center for Applied Linguistics.
PUB DATE 29 Feb 72
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Sixth Annual TESOL Convention, Washington, D.C., February 29, 1972

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingual Education; *Educational Problems; *English (Second Language); Language Programs; Language Research; Nonstandard Dialects; *Organizations (Groups); *Professional Associations; Sociolinguistics; Standard Spoken Usage; Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the role of both the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) within the fields of English as a second or foreign language, English as a second dialect, and bilingual education. The relationship between the two organizations and the interests, structures, and operations of each are considered. In addition to describing the different spheres of influence of both organizations, the paper discusses how the two groups may complement and cooperate with each other. (VM)

ED 064997

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

ALBERT H. MARCKWARDT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TESOL AND THE CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

At the time that this particular topic was assigned to me, the expectation was that I would be speaking primarily as a representative of the Center for Applied Linguistics. Because of personal considerations, I requested early this month that I be relieved of my administrative responsibilities there. As a consequence, I appear before you in a quite disinterested role: a member of TESOL on the one hand, and of the Center's Board of Directors on the other, with the well-being of both ~~organizations~~ enterprises very much at heart. Naturally, any consideration of the relationship between the two must begin by taking into account the interests of both organizations, their respective structures, and the way in which they must operate as a consequence of those structures.

From the very beginning of its existence, the Center for Applied Linguistics has had English as a second or foreign language as one of its foci of activity. Indeed, the first conference which the organization ever organized and held was concerned with this topic. Preparations for it were made at a time when Raleigh Morgan, then the Associate Director, had not even secured a desk. As time went on, English as a second dialect became the primary concern of the Center's Program in Sociolinguistics, and although the Center has not gone much beyond sheer clearing-house and information-gathering activities with respect to bilingual education, it would like to do more if support were forthcoming. The interest of TESOL in all three fields is clearly evident from the program which has been prepared for this annual convention -- or one might even say four fields or domains, if the distinction between English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language is kept clearly in mind.

It must be recognized, however, that these four domains quite properly constitute the sum total of TESOL's interests and activities. This is not

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

FL003378

true of the Center, which justifiably extends its interest and involvement in applied linguistics to other areas. It has long been concerned with the teaching of foreign languages, both intensively and at the regular academic pace, and in the development of teaching materials for certain of the less frequently taught languages. It is just now embarking on a large scale project for describing all the languages of the world. It has, in its time, held conferences on lexicography, on metrics, and may well stand as a co-sponsor to a meeting devoted to semiotics. In short, whatever is to be gained from concentration of attention will accrue to TESOL. Those contributions which a variety and range of experiences make possible will naturally fall to the Center. This should be kept in mind as we consider the activities which each organization is best equipped to undertake.

Next, there is the matter of the structure of the two groups. TESOL is a professional organization, with what appears to be a rapidly growing membership. It represents what is in some ways a young or new profession, with both the advantages and disadvantages of youth, but it is *at least* ~~rapidly~~ approaching maturity, thanks to the excellent leadership which it has had in its formative years. The Center, on the other hand, functioning as a clearing house and an agency for research and educational contract work, has a small permanent staff. Again, each of these structures permits the organization to do certain kinds of work effectively and renders other types of activity more difficult. It is out of these differences in purpose and structure that a concept of the relationship between the two must emerge, and I would hope we might go beyond the relatively negative task of delimiting spheres of influence to the positive one of determining how the two groups may not only complement but cooperate with each other.

Focusing for a moment on TESOL, we may profitably ask, what is it that

one expects from a professional organization, especially as distinct from a purely learned society, such as the Linguistic Society of America, whose prime object is to furnish a public platform for those who have been engaged in research and to provide the means of disseminating published research to those engaged in the discipline. In contrast, I ~~would~~ presume that it is a prime aim of a professional society to develop a sense of professional responsibility and professional solidarity in its membership, and to pursue whatever activities will lead to that goal. Research is important, of course, but for a professional society it should constitute a means to an end rather than the end itself.

In terms of its current four-fold concern with English as a second and as a foreign language, Standard English as a second dialect, and bilingual education, which are similar but certainly not identical in character, the professional obligations of TESOL take on qualities of magnitude and complexity. With respect to English as a second or foreign language, its concerns span the range of teaching English abroad and of English for university level students in this country, to say nothing of English as a component of adult education for the foreign born. The involvement with Standard English as a second dialect raises a host of sociological, psychological, sociolinguistic, and educational issues which often, unfortunately, seem to generate considerably more heat than light. Bilingual education is, or should be by definition a two-way street, and as a consequence the organization cannot avoid a degree of professional responsibility for both English and foreign-language teaching at the elementary-school level.

With respect to most of these matters, we are, comparatively speaking, in a state of professional ~~infancy~~ adolescence. In effect, this means that there is much work to be done. All sorts of information needs to be gathered. We just

don't know who is teaching what, where, and under what circumstances. This is particularly true of the adult education programs in English as a second language, but there are ~~many~~ many other gaps in our knowledge as well. We know very little indeed of the position of English language instruction in any number of foreign countries; in fact, the only one for which we have even part of the situation systematically presented in a monograph is Japan. As early as 1969 I urged that a number of studies of this kind be undertaken, if for no other reason than to give form and direction to our English-teaching efforts abroad. Though projects of this kind must be carried out by individuals, the responsibility for mounting them properly belongs to the organization which represents the entire profession. Currently this organization lacks the resources to carry out such an ambitious program, but there is no reason why it should not attempt to secure the necessary support.

Despite the fact that millions of dollars are now being poured into what the U.S. Office of Education presumes to be bilingual education, any effort to develop an overall picture of this operation seems now to meet with frustration at every turn. One of my colleagues remarked to me not so many months ago that there is not even a satisfactory taxonomy of efforts in this field, and even if one should considder Mackey's article as a satisfactory model for such a classification, the application to ongoing efforts still needs to be made. I mention these as profession-wide concerns which are most properly the responsibility of the professional organization in the field.

But more than merely the collection of pertinent information falls within the proper scope of the professional organization. The field of education in the United States has traditionally avoided the development of a strong central guiding force. As a result, it has been torn apart by any number of

special interest groups, each of which seeks as much assistance as is conceivably possible for its particular area of interest. Under these circumstances, an organization such as TESOL must speak for its constituency in every conceivable manner and at every possible forum. Decision makers everywhere, educational agencies of every kind must be made to understand the complexities of the task we face and the conditions necessary for us to carry out our proper educational function. Who is there to make this point except the one organization which properly has the only claim to representing the profession?

Other groups must understand as well, as the Peace Corps did not at the outset of its program, that to teach English as a foreign language, or even as a second dialect, requires a type of training considerably more focused, specialized, and linguistically sophisticated than that which characterizes the ordinary English major on the baccalaureate level or the English teaching candidate in a college of Education. TESOL has already made this point in an exemplary fashion through its Guidelines, a document which one may point to as a prime example of the fulfillment of a professional responsibility. In connection with this, the organization must nonstantly seek to explain and clarify the role of linguistics in language teaching, a concept often difficult for the novitiate to grasp.

Nor is it sufficient to make these points solely through the centralized national organization. There are the state and local affiliates to be considered as well, since they afford an excellent opportunity to serve as channels of communication down to the local level. And at the same time that we are thinking of the affiliates in this country as a means of wider communication, we must not overlook the opportunities which are offered by some kind of association with the professional organizations of English teachers

throughout the world. Wherever I go, on my rounds of visits to English teachers in other countries, I am besieged with questions about the possibility of establishing a link of one sort or another with TESOL. I am aware that the Executive Committee has approached this question somewhat gingerly, and I can understand the reasons for doing so, but the desire and the demand for professional leadership are there. It would be a pity not to take advantage of them.

At all events, these are the directions which a professional organization is especially equipped to undertake. By virtue of an active and dedicated membership, it can serve as a forum for the discussion and clarification of professional and educational issues in a way that the Center for Applied Linguistics could never begin or even hope to approach, not only through public discussion but through the medium of its excellent journal as well. Once decisions have been reached, it can serve as the voice of the profession, and indeed it is the only organization that can properly do so. When necessary, its membership can be mobilized either to gather pertinent information or to make its voice heard.

At the same time there are limits to the potential achievement of an organization which meets just once a year and operates from convention to convention chiefly through its committee structure, especially when there are only very limited funds to support committee activities. This is not a problem peculiar to TESOL. It exists in the National Council of Teachers of English, in the Modern Language Association, in the Linguistic Society, and in a half-dozen others that I am personally involved in. In fact, the problem seems to be endemic to the entire range of professional and learned societies in this country.

It follows, therefore, that certain specifically focused tasks might

well be achieved more effectively by a small cadre of persons working in close collaboration under the aegis of an organization such as the Center of Applied Linguistics. Communication is less of a problem; coordination can come about more readily in a hierarchical structure than in a democratic one committed to operate under rules of parliamentary procedure. There are, in fact, certain activities which both groups would be well advised to avoid, the development of teaching materials and curricular guides in particular. There was a time when publishers were reluctant to invest risk capital in the kinds of textbooks which you and I would like to see and use, but this period is long since over. True enough, the National Council of Teachers of English did produce the English for Today series, but this was in response to a particular situation at a specific point in time. Knowing more than I would like to about the managerial difficulties that the project has encountered in its relationship with the publishers and the government agency which originally funded it, I feel that the lesson is clear: neither a professional association nor a relatively small research and clearing-house operation is ideally suited to this task. I would extend my observation here to include materials for teaching Standard English as a second dialect and those designed to serve bilingual schools. It may well be that either group might lend its efforts to the development of a prototype course, but for anything beyond that, I would recommend caution.

Since we are discussing publication, I should like to say that TESOL deserves great credit for the excellent journal it has developed within a very short period, thus filling a much-needed gap in the publication outlet for pedagogical articles in this area. Book publication, however, is a quite different story -- and I am now speaking about published research rather than teaching materials. Again, the experience of other organizations

shows that a venture into the book publishing field requires a financial investment, time and manpower, to say nothing of storage space, which a small but growing association can scarcely hope to command. This kind of activity might better be left to the Center, which possesses a sound backlog of editorial experience, but even there its facilities for promotion and distribution leave much to be desired.

Meeting the research needs of the profession presents a complex problem. It is fair to say, I suppose, that we should like to have much more information than we now possess upon two basic points: the structure of the English language in all its styles, registers, forms, and varieties, and how it is to be learned and taught. In connection with both of these, there are still many tasks which can profitably be undertaken by the individual scholar, and surely it is the function of the professional society, through the forum provided by its annual meeting, and possibly through the stimulus inherent in its committee structure, to encourage such undertakings whenever possible. Although I have complimented TESOL on its journal, I should like to see it less dependent for copy than it now is upon papers presented at the annual meetings.

There is another kind of research, however, which must necessarily be cooperative in character, drawing essentially upon the efforts of several scholars and requiring more time than any one person or group of persons could give beyond a normal teaching load. Let us take note of a very specific case. It is now a decade since the compilation of the Brown University corpus of one million running words, representing a careful sampling of materials published during the year 1961. For any number of reasons, the collection needs to be replicated. This will require a considerable investment of time and money, to say nothing of the acquisition of

equipment. It will have to be supported through either grant or contract funds. On the surface, at least, it would appear that the structure of an organization such as the Center, or indeed even a university department is better adapted than a professional association to carry on a project of this kind. The same would seem to hold true of contrastive studies conducted on a scale involving extensive collaboration of American and foreign scholars.

A further type of activity which a professional organization would do well to avoid is that of undertaking to evaluate teaching and training programs of various kinds. Inevitably the organization itself or the members of the evaluating team will be accused of having an ax to grind, of less than total impartiality, and it may well become a disruptive force within the organization. This kind of project is much better left in the hands of an independent group, and even under such circumstances, the evaluations are not always well received. Recently one government agency announced that it was "rejecting" an evaluation which it had requested from a small research organization, happily not the Center.

It is wholly within the province of a professional organization to set standards and establish criteria for various kinds of educational activities, as was done with respect to the programs for training teachers of English as a foreign or second language. Here, if proper discussion is provided and membership approval secured, the organization is speaking for its professional membership. However, by its very nature, an accreditation or evaluation process must rest basically upon a delegation of authority, and however reasonable this may seem, the persons to whom this task is assigned will be substituting their individual judgments for that of the entire group.

Thus far I have dealt with complementary rather than cooperative activities, but the possibilities in the latter field should not go unnoticed. These, it seems to me, lie chiefly in the compilation and dissemination of information, that is to say the clearing-house function. It has always been important; as the profession grows and extends itself into the areas of bidialectal and bilingual education, it will become even more so.

The list of services that might be performed is almost endless. A file of bibliographic information must be maintained, one which ideally would extend to publications in foreign countries. In some of these, at least, the Center has contacts which TESOL would find hard to duplicate. If TESOL assumes the prime responsibility, there is every reason for the Center to lend support. With respect to a survey of research in progress, it is possible that the Center has both the facilities and a backlog of experience which would enable it to assume the primary responsibility here. We need information on where English in each of the four domains is taught. We need a roster of competent personnel in the field, at all levels of education, both in this country and abroad. A list of speakers to serve local, state, and regional workshops should be prepared and distributed. These are but a few of the possible clearing-house activities. Patently the task is too great for either organization, given its present resources, to undertake successfully.

What would seem to be required is long-range planning on the part of both groups, the establishment of a set of priorities for each organization as well as a set of common goals, and frequent consultation with the aim of assuring that progress will be forthcoming. And in order to avoid duplication with what is going on in London, there must be the same kind

of planning with the counterpart groups there. As far as TESOL and the Center are concerned, a detailed blueprint cannot be devised in a brief talk such as this. But it does seem to me that one broad guideline will serve to set the pieces in their place. TESOL is a professional organization. As such, service to its membership, both directly and indirectly, must underlie the bulk of its activities. The Center has as its raison d'etre service to the discipline. The fulfillment of these two goals will at times entail slightly overlapping activities, but it is safe to say that if these two basic differences in purpose are kept in mind, possible avenues of fruitful complementation and cooperation will increasingly become apparent.